Tobacco Export

1667. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 26 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 26th February, 2002 and state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to allow foreign direct investment for cultivating international quality tobacco;

(b) the special measures being taken to boost tobacco export; and

(c) whether there are other steps contemplated in the interest of ryots?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) No change is contemplated in the present practice of not permitting FDI in the tobacco sector.

(b) Government's efforts to boost tobacco exports include participation in international trade fairs and exhibitions, organisation of delegations of tobacco traders and exporters to various countries and discussions at bilateral official meetings.

(c) Government, through the Tobacco Board safeguards the interests of the farmers through attempts to maintain a balance between demand and supply in the market through regulation of production, sale of tobacco through auction platforms, assistance in identifying export markets etc.

FDI in real estate sector

1668. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal for inviting. FDI in real estate sector also;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) if not, whether Government would consider doing so in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Waiver of interest on repayment of loan

1669. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to introduce a scheme trader which interest is proposed to be waived on the loan upto Rs. 25,000/- in the event of repayment of Principal amount of loan in lump sum;

(b) if so, the salient feature of the scheme; and

(c) the manner in which Government are likely to be benefited?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) and (b) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) have issued guidelines to public sector banks on 22nd December, 2001, for settlement of all loan accounts with outstanding balance upto Rs. 25,000/-. These guidelines cover all loan accounts with outstanding balance of principal amount upto Rs. 25.000/- in all sectors, suit-filed and decreed debts and will not cover cases of fraud malfeasance and will be operative upto June 30, 2002. Under these guidelines the amount that should be recovered would be the balance outstanding towards principal in the loan account as on 31st March. 1998 and any interest which is included in the outstanding amount as on 31st March, 1998 or accrued on the balance outstanding after 31st March, 1998, will be waived.

(c) The benefit of the scheme will accrue to the banks and the small borrowers and this will also reduce the stock of Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) in the small borrowal accounts.